

Amigos Internacionales

Encyclopedic History, 1967–2026

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Amigos Internacionales, Whitehouse, Texas

EIN 23-7000057

This document is the encyclopedic-style history of Amigos Internacionales as compiled for permanent reference. Every claim is attributed to an independent, published primary source — contemporary newspapers, government records, denominational journals, and international development reports. Source documents are independently archived at archive.org/@amigos_internacionales and via the Wayback Machine to ensure the evidentiary record outlives any single platform.

Amigos Internacionales is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Whitehouse, Texas. It was founded in 1967 in Athens, Texas by Dr. John LaNoue and Jim Wren.^[1] The Internal Revenue Service granted it tax-exempt status in 1968 (EIN 23-7000057).^[1]

History

Founding (1967–1972)

Dr. John LaNoue and Jim Wren started construction of mobile medical and dental clinics for the Texas/Mexico border in 1967.

In November 1970, Amigos Internacionales signed a letter of agreement with the Government of British Honduras. The agreement was executed in Belmopan on November 5, 1970. It was countersigned by Hon. Carl Hindbergh Bernard Rogers, Minister of Home Affairs and Health. Under the agreement, Amigos committed to operating mobile medical and dental units in rural areas at its own cost. The government agreed to waive customs duties on Amigos' equipment and supplies.^[2]

The *Tyler Morning Telegraph* reported the signing of the document on December 14, 1970, under the headline "Athens-Based Amigos Sign Honduras Pact." The article said the agreement was drafted with assistance from the U.S. Embassy. It named Robert Boal, USAID director, as a party to the agreement.^[3]

In April 1971, *The Voice of Mission Action* — published by the Baptist General Convention of Texas — ran a front-page feature headlined "Amigos To Help British Honduras." The article was written by Robert O'Brien, press representative for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. It quoted Jim Wren, director, describing British Honduras as "the cornerstone upon which to build a medical-dental ministry."^[4]

In November–December 1971, the *GP Press* — the journal of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians — published a feature by J.T.L. McNew, M.D., headlined "Medical Charity: New, Rewarding Horizons." The article ran on pages 14–15 of Volume XXII, Number 6. The article described the organization's mobile medical-dental work in British Honduras.^[5]

Mission Action News published two features in June 1971. One, headlined "Skills Combined to Outfit Clinic," described the construction of Amigos Internacionales' fifth mobile clinic in Athens, Texas. It quoted Jim Wren as president and named John LaNoue as the coordinator of volunteer efforts for the renovations.^[6] The second article, "Gift to Benefit Many," was written by Jim W. Jones, suburban editor of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. The article reported that Dr. John Tottenham had donated medical equipment — including X-ray and electrocardiogram instruments — for use in the mobile clinic program of Amigos.^[7]

In April 1972, *Mission Action News* documented the construction of a Mobile Disaster Unit and related volunteer activities.^[8]

On November 27, 1972, the *Kilgore News Herald* published an article headlined "Mission Group Sets Meeting." It described Amigos Internacionales as a Christian mission organization that had built six mobile medical and dental clinics — five in the Rio Grande Valley and one in Central America. The article reported that John LaNoue and Charles Whiteside, originally from Athens, was directing the clinics from a Kilgore, Texas headquarters.^[9]

The *British Honduras Newsletter* — an official government publication — recorded on May 14, 1972, that Amigos Internacionales had presented as a gift, a mobile dental unit to the British Honduras Health Minister.^[10]

Belize programs (1973–1995)

On February 18, 1973, *The Reporter* — a Belizean weekly newspaper — published an article headlined "Amigos of Texas Are Settling In." It included a photograph of the Amigos mobile clinic and quoted Jim Wren by name. The article reported nine volunteer doctors participating in the program. It reported that the clinic was operating in Punta Gorda, Belize.^[11]

In March 1979, *The Monitor* of McAllen, Texas, reported that a University of Texas medical team, working through Hidalgo Independent School District, near the Texas/Mexico border, had contracted Amigos Internacionales to provide dental services. The article said roughly 200 students had been screened that school year.^[12]

On May 3, 1981, *The Reporter* published a second article about the organization, headlined "'Amigos' Will Help Belize." It reported that Amigos Internacionales representatives had met with the Belize government in Belmopan.^[13]

In August 1982, the *Marshall News Messenger* published a feature by Managing Editor Ferrell Paxter headlined "Amigos Internacionales: They Pull Teeth for God." It profiled the organization's volunteer medical and dental work in Belize. The article quoted Jim Wren, president, on the government agreement and described Dr. George Stephens performing dental work in the Mayan villages.^[14]

On December 8, 1985, a United Press International wire story ran in multiple regional daily newspapers, including the *San Antonio Light* and the *Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph*. The story was internationally filed from Crique Sarco, Belize. It named Dr. Kerfoot Walker, director of the Tyler-Smith County Health Department, as expedition coordinator. It listed eight volunteer physicians and dentists by name. It confirmed the organization was founded in 1967 in Athens, Texas, by Jim Wren and John LaNoue, and described clinic and it's operations at Punta Gorda, Belize.^{[15][16]}

In March 1991, the *Citizens Journal* of Atlanta, Texas, reported that Dr. David Nichols, a dentist from Tyler, had traveled to Belize with Amigos Internacionales as a medical mission director. The article described the organization as "Texas-based" and noted that Nichols had made the same trip "numerous times over the last 15 years" as a volunteer for Amigos, at his own expense.^[17]

On June 29, 1995, the *Waco Tribune-Herald* published a feature by staff writer Scott A. Castor, headlined "What Friends Are For." It profiled the organization's program for collecting and distributing

16-millimeter educational films to developing nations. The article quoted Jim Wren, identified him as president. It described the organization as a 28-year-old nonprofit with a nine-member board of directors, operating from a base in Woodway, Texas (Waco).^[18]

International relief (1997–1998)

In 1997, Amigos Internacionales was part of a consortium that monitored USDA food distribution in North Korea during the famine. The other members were Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corps, CARE, and World Vision. The consortium monitored distribution of 60,500 tons of cereals from the U.S. Agency for International Development. An Associated Press wire story in the *Staten Island Advance* on November 21, 1997, reported that the consortium had confirmed food was reaching intended recipients.^[19]

The organization's director, Ken Dupuy, was included on the guest list for a dinner hosted by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on October 10, 2000. That dinner honored North Korean Vice Marshal Jo Myong Rok, the highest-level North Korean official to visit Washington at that time. Other guests included representatives of Mercy Corps, the World Food Programme, and the Brookings Institution.^[20]

In November 1998, following Hurricane Mitch, the *Star-Ledger* of Newark, New Jersey, published a feature by staff writer Carol Ann Campbell headlined "Relief efforts rush aid to Central America." The article named Amigos Internacionales among organizations shipping disaster relief supplies. It quoted director Dr. Kenneth Dupuy on the plan to ship blankets, clothing, water purifiers, and medicines to Central America. The article noted the organization had "workers in several countries."^[21]

Uganda (2017–present)

On April 1, 2022, the *Greenville Herald-Banner* published a feature by staff reporter Travis Hairgrove headlined "Commerce-based charity helps children in Uganda, Central America." It traced the organization's then-headquarters to Commerce, Texas.^[22]

In February 2024, the *Baptist Standard* — the news journal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas — published a profile by Managing Editor Ken Camp headlined "Ministry seeks to transform remote African villages." The article described the organization's work in the Ogul Village area of Gulu District, northern Uganda. It described a seven-phase plan for the region, beginning with land acquisition and a water well, moving to schools, churches and community gardens.^[23]

In April 2026, *New Vision* — Uganda's largest-circulation national daily — reported that Amigos Internacionales organized a free seven-day pediatric surgical camp at St. Kizito Hospital Matany in Karamoja District. Partners included the Uganda Ministry of Health, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Doctors on Mission International, and BethanyKids. The camp was scheduled to treat approximately 300 children.^[24]

In 2026, Amigos Internacionales received renewed regional and international coverage for its medical outreach in East Africa. The *Tyler Morning Telegraph* reported that the organization, under president

and CEO Michael Ryer, was supporting medical missions, school sponsorship, clean-water work, and the MissionPoint community-development model in Uganda and other countries.^[25] In April 2026, Ugandan news outlets reported that Amigos Internacionales helped organize a seven-day pediatric surgical camp at St. Kizito Hospital Matany in Napak District, Karamoja, in collaboration with Uganda's Ministry of Health, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Doctors on Mission International, BethanyKids, Mwagale Foundation, and Southern Baptist missionaries.^{[26][27]} Mbarara University of Science and Technology also listed Amigos Internacionales among the partners supporting the surgical camp, which focused on pediatric general surgery, ENT procedures, and cleft lip and palate repair.^[28]

Government recognition

Amigos Internacionales appeared as a named awardee in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's *FY 2017 International Food Assistance Report to Congress*, Appendix C, page 21.^[29]

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External links

- Official website: <https://www.amigosii.org>

- Archive.org collection: https://archive.org/details/@amigos_internacionales
- ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer: <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/237000057>
- Charity Navigator: <https://www.charitynavigator.org/ein/237000057>

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